



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Fort Mason, San Francisco, California 94123

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L30 (GOGA-PASE)

May 10, 2004

Dear Participant:

This letter is an invitation to participate in the next phase of the rulemaking process for addressing dog management policies, including off-leash dog walking, at Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Consistent with our commitment to include the public meaningfully in development of a GGNRA dog management rule, we are inviting you to be a key part of this phase of the process. This letter is being sent to people like yourself who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to GGNRA dog management issues.

This phase of the process is a "Situation Assessment" that will involve a series of interviews with members of identified interest groups. Under the auspices of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, a highly qualified team of experienced mediators was brought on board to complete the Assessment and facilitate the process. These interviews will determine whether certain key conditions are satisfied in order to justify forming a committee, including whether there is a representative committee of persons who could adequately express the concerns of affected interest groups and would be willing to negotiate in good faith to reach a consensus on a proposed rule for GGNRA allowing off-leash dogwalking.

Subsequently, a Negotiated Rulemaking Committee could be formed under the Federal Advisory Commission Act to work formally with the GGNRA to investigate a regulation for Golden Gate to allow off-leash dogwalking in certain areas of the park where resources and visitor safety will not be impacted. The Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, January-April 2002, listed initial perimeters for consideration for off-leash use. Concurrent to the committee meetings, an environmental review following federal NEPA guidelines would also be completed on any proposed regulation allowing off-leash dogwalking.

Rulemaking typically is managed entirely by a federal agency, which develops a draft rule, publishes that rule in the Federal Register for public comment, and then publishes a final rule following analysis of the public comments. However, we are moving forward with Negotiated Rulemaking, an alternative process, where a representative committee of stakeholders works with an agency to develop a consensus recommendation regarding a proposed rule. We feel that your input is vital to helping us explore a potential new regulation allowing off-leash dogwalking in certain areas of the GGNRA, as well as to contribute to education, public awareness and implementation of the new rule should we reach consensus. The federal rulemaking process is explained on our web site at www.nps.gov/goga/pets/regneg.

The Assessment Team will be led jointly by Greg Bourne (Center for Collaborative Policy) and J. Michael Harty (CDR Associates). The Team worked with GGNRA staff to identify appropriate individuals to contact, and will make independent decisions about who is interviewed based on input from GGNRA and other stakeholders like you.

I am writing to personally seek your support for the situation assessment. You can expect to be contacted directly by either Greg or Mike, or another member of the assessment team. They will provide details about the assessment process and make arrangements to speak with you. The GGNRA will participate in the assessment process as one of the interest groups and I will be interviewed, along with members of my staff. Greg and Mike and team members expect to conduct multiple sets of interviews.

If you have any questions about GGNRA's rulemaking process, please contact Chris Powell at (415) 561-4732 or Shirwin Smith at (415) 561-4947. Please direct any questions about the situation assessment process to Greg Bourne (916-445-2079) or Mike Harty (530-297-7234).

I appreciate your support and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Brian O'Neill
General Superintendent